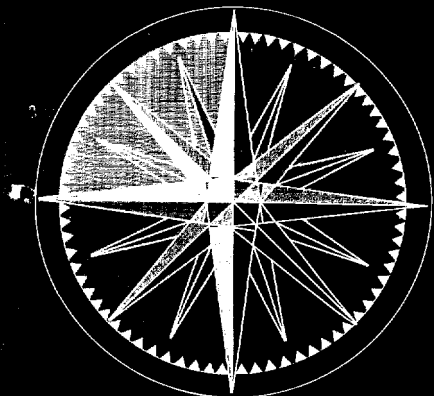


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SPECIAL REPORT

MALI -- PEIPING'S LEADING AFRICAN BOOSTER

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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MALI--PEIPING'S LEADING AFRICAN BOOSTER

The impoverished and thinly endowed Republic of Mali, a leading radical African state since it received its independence from France nearly five years ago, at present provides Communist China with its most solid propaganda support in Black Africa. Relations between the two countries, always good, have in recent months become appreciably closer as contacts have been stepped up and new bilateral agreements have been signed. These developments seem certain to lead to a further expansion of Peiping's already relatively substantial presence and influence in Mali, especially as major leaders of Mali's Marxist-oriented regime view Chinese aid and example as particularly suited to their country's needs.

Meanwhile, the Malian Government has already become the continent's most enthusiastic public backer of Peiping, even hailing the Chinese nuclear weapons program, despite its own adherence to the limited test ban treaty. Over the same period, Mali has vented increasingly sharp and direct attacks on the US, largely because of developments in the Congo. Chinese gains have been counterbalanced to some extent, however, by an improvement in the local position of France--still Mali's most important foreign aid source--and by recent signs that Moscow intends to try to recoup some of the ground it lost to Peiping in Mali last year.

The general pattern of development in the Malian-Chinese relationship is broadly, although not so dramatically, applicable to other radically inclined African states.

Chinese Goals in Africa

Peiping regards Africa as a land of promise and has been making a major effort to woo the newly independent African states. China's long-range goal is to bring into being Communist regimes whose leadership is aligned with the Chinese party.

Peiping is willing over the short term, however, to work with bourgeois nationalists who have come to power in most of the new nations--encouraging their already strong anticolonialist sentiment and attempting to channel it into an anti-American and anti-Soviet stream. When such nationalists are of the

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"progressive" stripe, as in Mali and other radical African states, this inclination is all the stronger.

Since Peiping is unable to afford economic and technical assistance programs on the same scale as those offered by the West and by the Soviet Union, it relies heavily on the propaganda effect of its more modest efforts. In the past six months, the Chinese have stepped up their efforts in Africa considerably, concentrating on those countries that appear most ready to accept the wares they offer. In Mali, Peiping sees an invaluable opportunity to establish a showcase in which to display the benefits which accrue from traveling the Chinese path, and thus, to sell other African states the Peiping brand of helpfulness.

Recent Malian-Chinese Relations

High-level contacts between Mali and Communist China reached a new peak during 1964. They began with a visit to Bamako, Mali's capital, by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai and Foreign Minister Chen Yi, who were making an extensive African tour. Although no immediate tangible results were forthcoming from this encounter, it served to quicken mutual interest and probably contributed at least indirectly to Bamako's subsequent accelerated movement toward closer rapport with Peiping.

This movement appears to date from about last June, when

Mali's number two man, Minister of State Kone, visited China. Although not one of the regime's extremists, Kone was evidently impressed by what he saw and the attentions paid him. Then in July, Minister of Development Seydou Badian Kouyate went to China. A convinced Marxist theoretician who was already known for pro-Peiping views, Kouyate appeared on his return to have been taken in completely by the Chinese line. The same month a Chinese "good-will" delegation led by Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Lu Hsu-chang arrived in Bamako on what turned out to be the first leg of a lengthy West African tour for which Mali served as the local staging area.

These exchanges were capped in the fall with a long visit by Malian President Modibo Keita to all the Asian Communist countries. Accompanied by a large entourage, Keita was in Peiping for the 1 October national observances, during which he shared the spotlight with the leaders of Congo (Brazzaville) and Cambodia. In early November he returned to China for a week, after attendance at the Cairo Nonaligned Conference, a pilgrimage to Mecca, and visits to the capitals of North Vietnam, North Korea, and Outer Mongolia. At this time, Keita and Chinese President Liu Shao-chi signed the standard "friendship treaty" which Peiping reserves for specially favored countries and also an "aid protocol," the details of which have never been spelled out.

In his speeches in Asian capitals, and especially in the

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joint communiqué concluding the second Peiping visit, Keita supported Chinese propaganda positions on virtually every international issue (see inset). He saw, with the Chinese, an "excellent revolutionary situation" existing all over Africa, expressed gratitude for China's "disinterested" aid, and warmly congratulated the Chinese for having recently "put an end to the monopoly and atomic blackmail of imperialism." Keita did not at that time follow Peiping in specifically attacking the US, however.

Back home, Mali's press and radio, which have long been under the immediate direction of regime extremists, gave effusive coverage to Keita's China visit. Each day there were extensive accounts of the attentions paid the Malian visitors by Peiping's top leaders.

Since his return to Bamako, Keita and other Malian spokesmen have continued to a degree unique in Africa their advocacy of positions on international issues which coincide with Communist China's. In particular, Mali's praise of the Chinese "bomb"--not openly welcomed by other African regimes--has grown even more extravagant. The Chinese nuclear device now is acclaimed by Mali's press and radio as a "bomb of peace" representing an achievement for the entire underdeveloped world.

President Keita personally appears to have been rather

**MALIAN PRESIDENT'S ENDORSEMENTS OF
CHINESE COMMUNIST POSITIONS**

Modibo Keita's Toast at Welcoming Banquet in Peiping,
29 September 1964

The present frenzy of imperialist, colonialist, and neo-colonialist aggression against peaceful peoples and of violence in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America is not evidence of strength; on the contrary, it is evidence of the decadence of a system which has fallen into a panic and is breaking up. Before long, the fury of the people and their determination to achieve freedom will deal a death blow to these expansionist schemes. The Chinese Peoples Republic and the Republic of Mali have proved and will continue to prove their constancy in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Joint Communiqué issued on Keita's departure from Peiping,
4 November 1964

The head of state of Mali warmly congratulated the Chinese people on their tremendous scientific, political, and moral success in exploding their first A-bomb. This great achievement of the Chinese scientists, technicians, and workers constitutes an important contribution to the enhancement of the defense capabilities of Asian, African, and Latin American peoples. It puts an end to the nuclear monopoly and nuclear blackmail of imperialism. The head of state of Mali expressed firm support for the Chinese Government's proposal for convening a summit conference of all countries on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Keita's Speech at Bamako on return from China,
28 November 1964

We are, of course, a nonaligned country, but our non-alignment does not mean a policy of equilibrium; our non-alignment does not mean silence with respect to imperialist aggression; our nonalignment does not mean that we keep silent at the violation of the rights of peoples and citizens; our nonalignment similarly does not mean that we deceive ourselves by cultural actions which tend to represent the socialist countries, the communist countries, as countries of disorder. We visited those countries, and I shall tell you, in all frankness, that if you wish to find a society in which man has a chance of fulfilling the plenitude of his faculties, it is there that you must seek it.

Keita's Welcoming Speech to North Korean Delegation,
Bamako, 2 December 1964

Dear brothers and friends from Korea, at the moment you arrived, the most powerful imperialism re-entered in Africa and took hold of the Congo with the most brutal ferocity by which the peoples of Africa and Asia know it. By launching such a bloody blow at the dignity and honor of Africa, imperialism only hastens the course of its liquidation. The united forces of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and other people who will sooner or later join us, will force the imperialists to leave South Korea, South Vietnam, the Guantanamo Base, Congo-Leopoldville, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, South-West Africa, and South Africa.

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more interested in the domestic application of the things he was shown in China than in foreign policy pronouncements. The points he emphasized in reporting on his trip were the Chinese system of caring for children, the aged, and the handicapped, the fact that everybody worked, and the resourcefulness of the Chinese. He told his people that Malians could learn lessons in national awareness and self-reliance from Communist China.

The Malian Background

Although landlocked Mali is one of the larger African countries, it is underpopulated and generally lacking in natural resources, including water. Most of Mali's 4 million inhabitants are illiterate subsistence farmers or nomadic cattle herders; ethnic divisions, traditional caste and clan structures, and family obligations still dominate Malian society.

The principal cement holding the country together is its single political party, the Sudanese Union (SU), which has a centralized, authoritarian organization reaching into virtually every village, although it has not yet penetrated the nomadic tribes to any extent. The SU controls the government, dominates the administration and the information media, and through ancillary mass organizations for women, youth, labor, and other groups, imposes its will on all sectors of national life. Its doctrine is rooted in militant anticolonialism and

nationalism with a heavy admixture of Marxism and pragmatism; it places a high value on unity, discipline, and a socialized economy.

The SU was organized in 1946 and became the pre-eminent party in Mali about ten years ago by outbidding a rival party whose main support derived from traditional tribal leaders with close ties to French Socialists in the colonial administration. The SU leadership still takes pride in the puritanism and egalitarianism which constituted its early appeal.

The party's heavy leftist bias results largely from personal and organizational ties, particularly during its early formative period, between SU leaders and the French Communist movement. From 1946 to 1950, the interterritorial African nationalist organization of which the SU was the branch in Mali (then called French Soudan) was formally allied with the French Communist Party, and many of the contacts and convictions then acquired by Mali's present leaders have remained intact through the years. This background predisposed them, as it had Guinea's leaders, toward the Communist world and resulted in the establishment of extensive ties with the USSR and the Eastern European Communist countries immediately after independence.

The SU theoretically has collective leadership, but real authority increasingly is becoming concentrated in a small

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group of politburo members. Party and government in Mali are thoroughly intertwined, but the trend toward the concentration of power is even more pronounced within the government than in the party. In the past, family or tribal connections and local political backing were often extremely important factors in leadership selection, but as the government's problems have multiplied, talent and ideology have become more decisive. A cabinet reorganization in September 1964 greatly increased the influence of the party's most prominent pro-Chinese extremists. In addition to Kouyate, these include Ousman Ba, the SU's other principal Marxist theoretician, who became foreign minister, and Mamadou Gologo, the new information minister. Since his China trip President Keita himself seems to be a member of this group.

Mali's Problems and
The Regime's Rationale

Since Mali became independent its leaders have been frustrated by their inability to complete ambitious development plans at a faster pace and by a persistent economic crisis, aggravated by attempts to impose a "socialist option" in the fragile modern sector of the economy. There is a shortage of foreign exchange, due to Mali's establishment in 1962 of an independent, nonconvertible currency and to its limited production of export commodities. There is little to attract ordinary in-

vestment capital, and transportation costs and bottlenecks alone make most development schemes prohibitively expensive. Since receiving independence, the country's level of economic activity has declined steadily and the government has been forced more and more to live on a hand-to-mouth basis. Perhaps the most alarming development is the recent shortage of food staples in this country which historically has been a food surplus area.

The economic decline has inevitably produced some popular discontent, especially among the country's small African middle class, which has suffered most. However, the government has successfully stifled, by prompt use of force, the few overt manifestations of antiregime sentiment which have occurred. Two prominent leaders of the preindependence opposition party, imprisoned since a merchant's riot was suppressed in mid-1962, were killed under mysterious circumstances last July during a period of heightened public grumbling over food shortages.

Like other African radicals, Malian leaders blame most of their--and Africa's--troubles on colonialism. The usual accusations run that the colonial power--France, in Mali's case--deliberately kept the natives poor, illiterate, and underdeveloped in order to serve its own purposes of political domination and capitalist profit. Keita blames colonialism for

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the average Malian citizens disinclination for hard work and his lack of a sense of civic responsibility.

With such an outlook, Malian leaders find it easy to share in joint denunciatory statements of colonialism and imperialism and to add Asian and Latin American examples to the lists of victims. They have thus long been among the most active African advocates of militant Afro-Asian and "three continents" movements against US and European influence. Moreover, they insist that this attitude does not affect their vaunted nonalignment, which they view as applying only to the concerns of the major world powers.

Evolution of Mali's Foreign Relations in 1964

In the spring of 1964, Mali's economy had reached its lowest ebb. There was a net deficit in its balance of payments, the total overdue on various foreign debts exceeded \$15 million, and shortages of operating funds were worsening within the country. At this point, Mali turned in desperation to the International Monetary Fund, which came to the rescue with a stand-by arrangement under which Mali adopted a financial stabilization plan qualifying it for IMF advances amounting to \$5 million. The resulting austerity program not only cut back development spending, but also raised taxes, reduced wages and salaries, and lowered imports.

Partially as a reaction to domestic unrest and out of concern for the effect the retrenchment measures would have on Mali's African "image," government leaders announced that Mali would take a "more positive" position on the world scene and not remain "passively nonaligned." That this meant that Mali's avowed neutralism would henceforth incline even more sharply toward the Communist world was strongly indicated by the mid-September cabinet reshuffle and confirmed in October by Mali's role as one of the leading extremists at the Cairo Nonaligned Conference. However, the full flowering of the new Malian militancy came only with Keita's Asian tour.

By last December Malian spokesmen at the United Nations had become the most virulent of all the radical Africans. There and elsewhere, US policies--notably on the Congo, but also in a variety of other spheres--have been increasingly attacked. Originally indirect, these attacks since the Stanleyville rescue operation have specifically named the US as the target of criticism.

Peiping's Aid Program in Mali

Essentially, the pro-Peiping evolution of Mali's international posture in recent months appears to reflect a decision to try to induce the Chinese to expand significantly their commitment to Mali's faltering economic development. According to a Malian official who accompanied Keita to Asia,

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it seemed to the Malians that nobody else was willing by last summer to listen to their problems and discuss increased aid. Up to the time of Keita's visit, Peiping had offered long-term, no-interest credits amounting to \$19.6 million, considerably less than half the \$55 million committed by Moscow in 1961 and 1962, but never fully utilized.

Although this Chinese program, announced in 1961, has not been implemented with any special rapidity, it has gradually been translated into a number of specific projects now completed, under way, or planned. These range from construction of tourist facilities near the Guinean border to rice and tea cultivation projects, but most are designed to provide Mali with a variety of light industries. These undertakings account for the bulk of Chinese personnel now in Mali--recently estimated to have reached about 600.

According to clandestine reports, the "aid protocol" signed by Keita in Peiping provided for additional Chinese credits and grants to Mali amounting to over \$10 million. However, no such announcement has been made, and the protocol may only concern further specific projects under the original credits. New projects which China is said to have agreed to take on include paving the Mopti-Gao road, rebuilding the airport at Kayes, erecting a hotel and cinema in Bamako, increasing the power of Radio Mali, building a

textile plant at Sigou, and starting more light industrial installations at undesignated locations (see map on page 8). A Chinese delegation reportedly will arrive in Mali sometime early this year to conduct detailed studies, to be followed by a further substantial influx of resident technicians as projects get under way. In return for the new aid, the Chinese are reported to have solicited, in long discussions on international problems, Mali's continued support against "American imperialists."

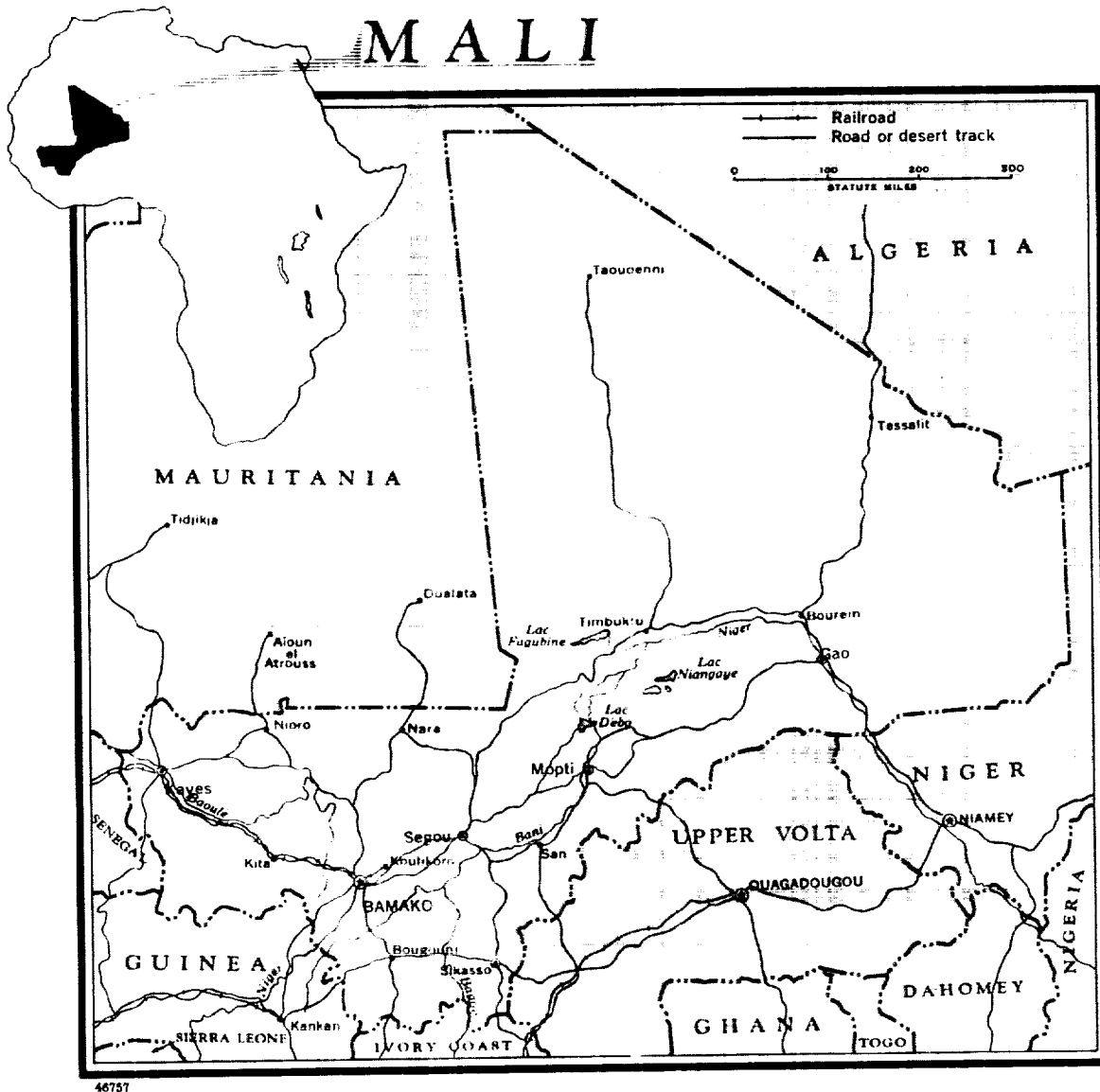
Unconfirmed reports from French Embassy and other sources in Bamako suggest that Mali is currently interested in bringing in Chinese laborers on a massive scale--3,000 is one of the lower figures cited. These workers supposedly would be used to intensify cultivation of rice and tea in the Niger Bend area of central Mali with a view to increasing local production sufficiently to provide a substantial surplus for export. It seems unlikely, however, that such a scheme would be realized in the near future, at least on a large scale.

The Chinese Image in Mali

Although Malian leaders seem to appreciate that the total amount of Chinese aid cannot in the foreseeable future be very large, in general they value it highly. All-out Sinophiles, like Kouyate, go so far as to call it the most important factor in Mali's

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economic development today. They seem utterly convinced of the disinterestedness of Peiping's help--"it is inconceivable to speak of Chinese neo-colonialism," said Kouyate on returning from his junket last summer. Others, less carried away, apparently feel that, among the big powers, China is less likely ever to be a threat

if only because it is so far away.

In comparison with other aid sources, Chinese aid has special appeal to Malians because they feel it is more prompt, less costly to them, and better suited to local conditions and needs. Foreign Minister Ba recently remarked

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to a foreign ambassador that at its present level of development Mali had far more in common with and felt much closer to China than the USSR, which is considered too advanced a country to understand Malian psychology and needs.

The Malians have been impressed, too, with the Chinese technicians who have come, particularly their energy, general friendliness, and simple mode of living. Many Chinese also score points by learning local languages and by playing up to Malians as fellow non-whites.

On a loftier psychological plane, Mali's leaders feel a special sense of kinship with the Chinese Communists growing out of what is viewed in Bamako as a recent common experience of breaking sharply with a humiliating past. The Malians fervently believe that their radical socialist regime has already achieved a political and social revolution which sets Mali apart from--and ahead of--most other African states, and they see China in much the same role for Asia and the underdeveloped world as a whole.

Outlook

Although the Chinese Communists are clearly in high favor in Bamako just now, the

regime's strong streak of pragmatism and even opportunism could at any time lead to a tempering of its public displays of affection. In the past, Mali has tended to shift its friendships according to its most pressing needs and best prospects of the moment. Some Malian leaders, including Kouyate, at times convey the distinct impression that, in terms of international orientation, their country is up for grabs and that the West is still regarded as a potential buyer.

In this connection, Mali's relations with France have in fact mellowed substantially since mid-1964--while the move toward Peiping has been under way and while US-Malian relations have deteriorated. In contrast to an earlier period when Paris was the favored propaganda target, Malian spokesmen have scrupulously refrained from any incrimination of France in their recent denunciations of "imperialist" activities. On several occasions Keita and others have even publicly praised De Gaulle's foreign policy as "lucid realistic, and farseeing." It would appear that Mali, consistently anxious to keep open its lines to the West, may be deliberately attempting to counterbalance its broadening Chinese ties by strengthening its links with France, which itself recognizes Peiping and which has not given overt support to the hated Tshombé regime in the Leopoldville Congo.

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Since late last year, Mali has become increasingly eager to resume discussions with France on a series of commercial and financial questions which have long troubled relations between the two countries. Preliminary talks apparently began in Paris last month. Malian leaders evidently hope, probably unrealistically, to acquire desperately needed budgetary support from France, which is already giving greater and more vital assistance to Mali than are the Chinese, even considering the reported additional credits.

There is always the possibility, too, that Bamako may

eventually become disillusioned with the effectiveness of Chinese aid as it did earlier with the much larger Soviet aid program. In any event, Moscow has already reacted to Mali's recent move toward Peiping by agreeing last month to construct a \$6-million cement factory. For the present, however, the Chinese are more welcome than any other foreigners in Bamako, and there seems little prospect of any early sharp reversal of the cordial relations which prevail between the two countries. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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